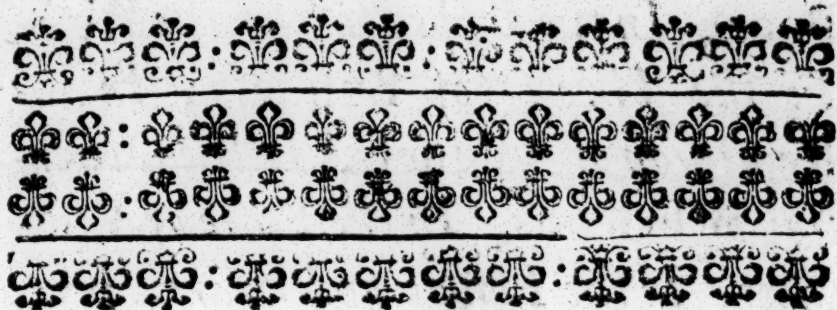




494:90



# THE INTRODUCTION.



*How great an Im-  
 postor is this  
 World unto us?  
 In the Diversity  
 of Reports and  
 Opinions, In the  
 Eager pursute of  
 Worldly Greatness, In the Hungry  
 Thirst of Carnal pleasures, In the*  
 A 2                      Heats



## The Introduction.

*Heats of Passion, In the Cryes of the Poor, In the Oppression of the Rich, In the Throng of Business; In the Remission of Idleness, In the Diversion of Friends, In the Spite of Enemies, In the Hopes and Fears, Joys, and Sorrows of this evil world, how few find Rest and Content? How many lose God and themselves? When I consider the usefulness and excellency of Divine Contentment, how necessary and profitable, pleasant and comfortable, beautiful and amiable; How it makes us Rich and Happy in despite of the world, fits us to do and receive good, and suffer evil; how it frees us from Sin and innumerable Temptations to it; how Creditable to Religion; how pleasing, like,*

## The Introduction.

like, and near, it is unto God. As also, the great trouble and burden, vanity and unreasonableness, hurt and unprofitableness; Pride, Unthankfulness; Rebellion and Unbelief: the sinfulness, mischief, and sad effects of Murmuring Impatience and Discontent; how much below the Spirit, Profession, and Duty, Relations, Dignity, and Expectations of Christians; what God hath had, and expects from Them; how dishonourable, displeasing, and provoking it is to Him; how it impoverishes and beggars us; renders us incapable of enjoying any mercy; excludes us from all true Joy, Comfort, Rest, or Safety; exposes us to all imaginable mischiefs and miseries:

## The Introduction.

ries : I am ashamed of my Folley, I am Confounded at, I crave Pardon for my Guilt ; I am Concern'd, I Resolv'd to be otherwise. Such like Considerations occasioned the Collection of those ensuing : And were they familiariz'd, and made part of our selves ; entertain'd with a firm unshaken Belief of their Truth and use ; we should not be at a loss where to Run for Relief in our Distress ; but be able (by Altering and Tempering the Dispositions and Inclinations of our minds and wills) to be happy in those Circumstances which render others miserable ; to frustrate and elude the effects of the most common Causes of grief and misery, making them

## The Introduction.

them *the Causes of pleasure and de-*  
*light ; those Occurrences and Acci-*  
*dents occasions of the greatest Joy,*  
*which imbitter the pleasures of other-*  
*men.*

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*ERRATA.*

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## ERRATA.

**P**AGE 32. line 10. read *the*. p. 34. l. 17. r. *Chearful*.  
p. 36. l. 5. r. *quit*. p. 39. l. 4. r. *directed*.  
p. 40. l. 24. r. *Exacts*. p. 42. l. 13. r. *effects*.  
p. 43. l. 15. r. *security*. p. 52. l. 5. r. *Eudoxia*. p. 53.  
l. 18. r. *comforts to the doleful moans deserving*. p. 55. l. 14.  
r. or. p. 56. l. 1. r. *shall*. p. 57. l. 21. r. *ill*. p. 64.  
l. 20. r. *Mat. 6. 25, &c.* p. 79. l. 4. r. *in your passage*  
*to it*. p. 87. l. 7. r. *are*. p. 89. l. 3. r. *Ataraxie*. p. 92,  
l. 8. r. *he*: p. 102, l. 22, r. *thy*, p. 103, l. 17. r. *thy*.  
p. 115, l. 20, r. *net*.

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# Christian Courage,

And Encouragement in

## EVIL TIMES.



His *World* is a *state of probation*; we live in it on no other Terms than to be liable to all the Hazards and Adventures, Troubles, Changes and Vicissitudes that attend *Mortality*. *Vanity* and *Vexation* are the Essence of all Earthly Things, incorporated into the mass of this visible Creation. Part of *Christ's dying Legacy*, and *His Spouse's joyniture*, is, *In this world you shall have Tribulation*; Her ordinary lot

B

and

# An Infallible Way

and portion; a Beaten path by *all Those*, the *Captain* of whose Salvation was made *perfect through Sufferings*: To be *Offended at them*, is to be *Offended* that we are *Men*, or *Christians*. Heavens highest favorites have *no Writ of Priviledg*, but the unspeakable Advantage of making *them easie* and *usefull*, by considerate, submissive, contented minds. Patience lessens pain and suffering; *Trouble* Aggravates, makes every sad Accident a double Evill; *Contentment* makes it none at all. If we will, it cannot harme us; If we give way to it, we wound our selves, and joyne with it to make us miserable, and a single mischief, a great many: But if we quietly sit still, and in patience possess our souls, we are what we were before the Evill came, only our Souls have the addition of the greatest joy and pleasure, by the *Victory* we have obtained over it and *our Selves*. The  
greatest

greatest of our misfortunes is our impatience. *Contentment* is better then the Thing we desire: Tis better to be Content through *Grace*, then through the Enjoying any outward comfort; *That* can content me but in one particular, but *this* grace in all; *That* makes my Soul better, the thing I would have cannot; In having my desire satisfied, I am content through self-love; but by this grace I come to be content out of submission and love to *God*; a shelter and Sanctuary within us against all Injuries Abroad, *who* fills the Faithfull Soul with his peace and presence. In *him* we find Refuge in our dangers, confidence in our Fears, comfort in our Sorrows, counsell in our Perplexities, light in Darkness, and *Life* in *Death*. Could we but as well Rejoyce in our *Present Happiness*, as *he* hath made provision for *It*, we could no more miss of *It*, then of *That* which is without end. For, consider



# An Infalible Way

*His Faithfulness, and Omnipresence.*

**H**E doth not set us to plow the Rock, to feed in a dry and Barren wilderness. He hath provided both for our *Safety* and *Tranquility*; The *Covenant* as well as the *Land of promise* *Flowers with Milk and Honey*; Hath in it Enough to make our conversation without covetousness, and to be content with such things as we have; for, *He hath said, I will never* (in no case, at no Time, upon no occasion, for no cause, in no condition, respect, or Relation, by no means) *Leave thee, nor forsake thee* (a). He may chang his *Dispensations*, but not his *Affections, Relations, Engagements*; *Chastise*, but not *disowne*, not *disinherit*; cast *down*, but not cast *off*; withdraw for a Time, but not depart for good an all; His loving kindness will he not utterly take from

(a) Heb.  
13. 5.

from us, nor Suffer his Faithfulness  
to faile. (b) He *Loves us too dear,* (b) Psal  
*Indeed, hath paid too dear for us,* 89.33.  
*to Leave us* in our defilements, without  
grace; in our disquietments and de-  
jections, without comfort; in our  
dangers and difficulties, without  
protection; in our graves without  
preservation. He will not leave  
us, in *Life*; not leave us, in *Death*;  
not leave us *after Death*; not leave  
us, when our breath hath left us;  
He will be a *Faster Friend* then our  
very Souls are to us. *He is with us*  
and *ours*, when friends (or we) are  
Absent, Enemies, Evills round a-  
bout us; *who* is most neerly related  
to us, who most dearly loves us, who  
will never be wanting to us in any  
thing that's fitt for us. In his Com-  
pany there can be no danger: If  
God be *for us, who, what* can be a-  
*gainst us*? none but such, as must  
be against himself, nothing but  
weakness, nothing to Hurt us.

## An Infallible way

*Estrangement from God, and distrust in Him,* are the causes of all disquietness in our selves. When we Run away from *him*, we Fly from our shield, our shaddow, our Rock, our Refuge, and lose our confidence of his protection. True *Peace* dwells not where *Sin* is not pardon'd and subdu'd, an uninterrupted course of piety maintain'd. He who lives carelessly, cannot be peaceable. There's no *protection* against *Fear*, but *innocency*. A good man is Satisfied from himself: neither shall they say, loe Here, or loe There (is Happiness) for the Kingdom of God is within you. Labour after *Truth*, and *Peace* will follow. A *good conscience* is our Suffering, sick-bed, death-bed cordiall; Spreads a softer pillow then others can lay their Heads on; causes the *patient* to *Smile*, while the *Spectators weep*; is a continual Feast when we have nothing else; Inables us to eat  
Hearbs

## to Contentment.

7

Hearbs, and drink water, and give  
God Thanks.

*Unbelief* creates all our Fears ;  
*makes* us weary of the day, and  
watch in the night ; our sleep short,  
and the night long ; our Dreams  
troublesom, our watchings painful ;  
A pale Face, a thoughtfull dis-  
ponding perplexed Heart, shuts  
up Heaven it self against us ; makes  
the God of Truth a Lyar. *Faith*  
opens Heaven, glorifies God, forti-  
fies, confirms the Heart, and Esta-  
blishes us ; fills us with courage and  
Acquiescence in him ; holds our  
hearts in a Holy Tranquillity amidst  
all the unequall motions of this life ;  
will make us stand upright even a-  
mong the Ruins of the great fall of  
the old Building of nature, when  
Heaven and Earth shall Tremble  
and shrink, hasting to a dissolution.  
He is sure to be *Fed*, who is able to  
*Believe* : Find out the *word*, and God  
will find out the *Deed*. Tell *him* what



# An Infallible way

He hath *Said*, and He will *make it good*: He never yet was worse then his word; or compounded for less then due, with any whom his promise made his creditor. *Joshua* throwes down the gantlet, and challenges all Israel to shew but the one thing God had fail'd them in, of all the good things he had Spoke concerning them (c): *faith* is the substance of things not seen; doubts not of *Food* though we see no *corne*; dispairs not of *Cloaths*, though we have not *Flax*; wants not a *Sacrifice*, though we have no *Heard* (d). *Faith* loves no disputes; Hates all doubtfull Reasonings; Banishes all carnall objections; sets not *providences* against *promises*; Triumphs over all *Seeming Contradictions*; looks upon the greatest Impediments, as difficulties which cannot *Check*, but only *Magnifie Almightiness*. There is no *question* left, where Gods promise is engaged; There is

(c) Josh.  
32 14.

(d) Hab.  
3 17, 18.

## to Contentment.

9

no *Objections* against *Faith*, nothing *Impossible* to him that can *Believe*; no desert without provision; no Dungeon without light; no Fiery Tryall without comfort; no valley of Teares, without a Dore of Hope. Never Fear (saith Faith) to urge the *promises*, to put the *Bond* in *Sute*. Thou hast *Law* on thy side; *Bills* and *Bonds* must be payed; A good *man* will be as good as his *word*; much more a good *God*; He that was so *Free* as to *make* it, will be so *Faithfull*, as to *make* it good.

Why then do we stumble at every straw? why are we of doubtful minds? and why do Thoughts arise in our Hearts? we will Then be distrustfull, when we have a *Want* He cannot Supply; a *Danger* He cannot prevent or Remove: a *Disease* He cannot Heal, or mitigate; an *Enemy* He cannot overcome or Reconcile; A *Red Sea* he

## An Infallible Way

- he cannot Dry up, or Divide; a wall he cannot Throw down, or Help us over, *who* sway's the Scepter of the universe, and lets loose, or binds up the creature's Influences at his pleasure: keeps the *Lyons* from Eating *one Prophet* (e), and the *Fish* from digesting another (f): The *Fire* from Touching three *Captives* in a Burning Furnace (g); Supplies the *Israelites* 40 years; where they neither Sow, nor Reap, Toyl, Beg, nor Steal (h); Alters the course of nature, and the Hearts of men; Removes all Impediments for *their* Succour, defence, Advantage: Cloaths the naked Trees. Recovers the verdure of the forlorne Earth. Exalts the setting Sun in its Beauty and Brightness. Spreads every day a *Table* where *all* may Reach convenient food: fills Empty *Naomi* with a famous off-spring (i): gives *Amaziah* much more then he had parted
- (e) Dan. 6.  
 (f) Jon. 1.17 & 2.10.  
 (g) Dan. 3.27.  
 (h) Deu 29.56.  
 Neh. 9. 20.  
 (i) Ru. 4. 17.

# to Contentment.

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parted with to the Army of *Israel*  
 (k): and *Job* double for what he (k)<sup>2</sup> Chr  
 took from him (l): Restores to his <sup>25.9.</sup>  
 penitents what the *Locusts* and (l)<sup>1</sup> Job  
*Caterpillers* had Eaten (m): Ac- <sup>42. 10.</sup>  
 complishes his promise of Incre- (m)<sup>1</sup> Joel  
 dible plenty in *Samaria*, and not <sup>2 25.</sup>  
 Raine it from Heaven neither (n): (n)<sup>2</sup> K.7  
 Recompences to *his people* the  
 comfort of Health and liberty which  
 Sickness had Impaired; of Re-  
 lations and Friends, which the  
 grave had devoured; of Houses  
 and Estates, which the Fire had  
 consumed. Builds his *Temple* a-  
 gainst all plots, and scandals, weapons  
 and oppositions, Discomfits the *Phi-*  
*listim's* by *Jonathan* and his *Armour-*  
*bearer* (o): delivers *Asa* with a Hand- (o)<sup>1</sup> Sam,  
 full; in comparison of a thousand <sup>14.</sup>  
 thousand (p): *Hezekiah* from *Sena-* (p)<sup>2</sup> chr,  
*cherib* (q): *Jehosophat* from the chil- <sup>14 8.</sup>  
 dern of *Ammon*, *Moab*, and *Mountseer* (q)<sup>2</sup> K.  
 (r): There's none saved by the multi- <sup>19 35.</sup>  
 tude of an *Host*. Subdues the mighties (r)<sup>2</sup> chr.  
 Prince, <sup>20.</sup>



# An Infalible way

*Prince*, by an Army mustered of his meanest Creatures. Routs an Innumerable Host with a few Trumpets, Lamps, and pitcher's; likelier to fright children then armed

(s) Jud. men (s): discountenances any *design*  
7-20.&c. if his Eye be but against *it*. If

he but *Hiss*, his Enemyes come with Speed, and Reveng his quarrell against themselves (t): let Him but *arise*, his Enemyes are *Scattered*

(t) Eccl. 5.  
26.

(u) Ps.  
68 1.

(u): with the Turning of his Hand He Turns them into Hell. Not a Creature in Heaven, Earth or Hell, but have an Ear to Hear Him, and stand Ready prest at His commission, to perform his pleasure (when he lifts up his Ensigne) against his Enemyes for His Friends. What can stand before a Creating power? He can do what he will, and will do for his what is Best, according to the dictates of Infinite wisdom and goodness.

Henceforth I will Imploy that  
Time

Time I used to spend in disquieting Thoughts about the things that disturbed me, in acts of love, and praise, submission and resignation, faith, and confidence in God. I cannot want or abound but from Thee, who givest before thou takest, and takest but what thou gavest. Give me what Thou wilt, so thou give me contentment with it. Frame my *Heart* to my *Estate*, so I shall have an *Estate* to my Heart; and not want when I have least, because as free from *desire*, as *Superfluity*. Religion teaches a man to be *without that* which others know not how to *want*; and an *Ability* to be *Content with a little*, is to be *more truly Rich*, then the *having much without being Satisfied*. I should be much Asham'd any should be found more *Content*, among all those that have *Less*. Had I *store*, I would not Impoverish my selfe by Covetousness;

ness; now *poor*, I will not make a little less by murmuring, but Inrich my selfe by content; so I have enough, with less trouble and danger, duty, and reckoning; I shall never pay for what I have; I hold all *in capite*; I have *All* with the love and favour of a Reconciled God, with a blessing, with the pardon of my Sins, with a thankful Heart, as a pledg of eternall mercies. While others grumble in looking on great mens *Estates*, i'lle tremble to think on their *Accounts*; and study more how to give a good *one* of my *Little*, then how to make it more: Gods Bounty sets all his *Gifts* on the *File*; the worst Servant *confessed*, though he *Im-*  
*ploy'd* not his *Talent*. Have I not more then I can give account of my spending Well? are not my Receits great enough already, but must I complain that I have not more to Answer for?

Nothing

Nothing can Add to, or detract from an Infinite good and Sweetness. Is not he better to us then Houses, or Lands, Friends, Riches, or Honours. *He hath all things that hath him that hath all things.* When *Christ* is given (a right to) *All* is given. No matter for *many things*, so I have *the one thing needfull*; to whom thou givest *Honour*, so I have a portion of thy *Grace*; In what *Place* I am, so I discharg the *duty* of it. *Who* can complain of *Neglect*, whom the *King* himself *Imbraces* and delights to *Honour*? of *Sickness*, whose *Sins* are *forgiven* him? of *want*, who hath an Interest in the *promises*? of *Poverty*, who hath an *Inheritance* in *Heaven*? of *dishonour*, who is the *Son of God*, who wants neither wisdom to direct, nor Interest to oblige him to do what is *best* for *him*? generall Invitations, and common mercys are for us as men, but  
where



where thou givest grace, thou comest close unto our Souls, and winnest us with dear and particular Intimations. If wee are *Christians*, we are *Richer* then the *World* can make us, which the *Worst* may have, and the *Best* want. *Thou* sufferest Infidelity to raign, to Instruct thy Disciples; and Abandonest the fairest part of the world to them that persecute thee. There can be no *Poverty*, where we have thee for our Inheritance: He whom thou Suffices not, deserves to be perpetually poor. Give me but to *Serve*, and *Relye*, upon *Thee*, and I ask no more.

*Encouragement from the Righteousness of God.*

CONsider his absolute, and unerring *Righteousness*, whereby he is *Infinitely Just* in himself, and by the highest, most perfect Rule of *Equity* (his will) governs his creatures: He doth them no wrong. He can do no wrong. Then, wherefore doth a *Living man* complain, a man for the Punishment of his sins (w). (w) Lam. 8.39.

We are [*men*] a mercy so outweighing any Temporall *Suffering*, as may well Transport us with joy and Admiration: Lord! what is *man* that thou shouldst *Magnifie Him*? In Creation, Redemption, Regeneration, Glorification? The nobility of our nature, should Advance us, shame us to a more chearfull exalted Temper. And the the Son of man that thou *visitest him*?

C

*him?* tutors, takes such notice, such particular care of *Him*, as to Reclaime, or Stop him in his wandrings; and *correct*, as well as *Feed Him?* A sign he hath not forgot *us*. The Rod of Discipline in *His Hand*, becomes a Scepter of Honour in *ours*. We ought rather Humbly to thank, then fretfully murmur against *Him*; Being so far from deserving any favours, that we are not worthy a blow, an ignoble contest.

We are [*But men*] in a state of Dependance, Subordination, and *Suffering*. And who art thou O man, that Replyest against *God?* Infinitely above *us*, unaccountable to *us*, Supream Lord over *us?* It belongs not to *us* in our militant state to *Chuse* our part, but to *Act it well*. Every one cannot be a commander, and *Common Soldiers* are not to *Counsell*, or *dispute*,  
but

but to *observe*, and *obey* their *Generall*; whether it be to fight in the Field, to dig in the Trench, or to stand upon the watch. Tis as unreasonable to *Refuse Submission* to him in what he *Commands*, as in what he *Inflicts*. We must expect Briers and Thorns, who have chang'd our condition, voluntarily translated our selves into another Soyle, And have no Reason to be grieved at the native Incumbrances and Inconveniencies of *it*, or to expect Exemption from them; to meet with nothing but the pleasures of a *Garden*, who have turned our selves out of *it*, into a *Wilderness*. Men repine at what is *Extraordinary*, and *unusall*, not general, and common to *all*. In vaine we murmur at what is *Natural*, or at what we *Cannot Remedy*; and Afflict our selves with a *Fatall necessity* which involves



# An Infallible Way

*Monarchs and peasants.* We must Build a world apart, and not be content with the Elements that serv'd our Ancestors turne; or bear the miserys of Humane nature (since we participate of it) and be one of those Several companys of mourners that make up mankind, whose shewers of Teares almost every where water (not to say overflow) this vale of Tears. When I have least, and Suffer most, *I* will Try how *I* am able to live with' less, and Suffer more; and Evidence by my chearfullness *in That* some call want and misery, that Happiness consists not in Superfluity, or ease; praising God for deeming me worthy to serve as a Tryall of Humane nature; to see to how high a pitch *Patience* can mount. Good men little consider *Their Spectators*, that strongly encounter all Troubles. If the searcher of Hearts found

## to Contentment.

21

found us not *fitt*, he would never Honour us with so hard imployment.

We are [*Living men*;] so may see better days, or improve These to our great advantage, who might be put beyond all possibility of Retrieiving our Errors, or Escaping *Eternall miserys*; on This side *which*, the greatest *Evills* are below the least *favours* above our *Deserts*. If our griefs be *short*, they deserve no great complaint; if *long*, their lastingness fashions us to patience. *Life* is dearer then any other Temporall mercy: And, the wages of Sin, is death.

We are [*Sinners*;] so all the plagues we are Capable of in this and the other world, are but our Due: If he Abate any thing of this, he punishes us less then our Iniquities deserve; and we have more Reason to praise him for his

# An Infallible way

*mercy*, then to complaine of, and Repine at *Just* and *Equall* dealings. A [*man*] for the punishment of his Sin! If He be but a *man*, have but *Rationall principles*, He must needs Acknowledg the Equity of *Suffering* for *Sin*, and of being *patient* under it, whereby he endeavours to Heal and Reclaime us, if he be patient towards us in our Sinning against him, whereby we oppose and provoke him. The Haughty *Monarch*, when Return'd to his witts, Harp'd upon the right string, *Those that walk in pride he is Able to Abase* (x): The *Heathen prince* Looking upon his hands and feet, lay'd his finger on the right sore, when he sayd, *As I have done, God hath Requited me* (y): The *Thief* had so much Ingenuity as to confesse *Acquiescence* under the *due Reward of Their Deeds* Reasonable (z): *Josephs Brethren* hit the nail

(x) Da. 3.  
37.

(y) Jud.  
117.

(z) Luk.  
41.

## to Contentment.

13

nail on the Head, in saying one to another, *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that when we saw the Anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: now is this distress come upon us* (a): Am not I verily guilty concerning my Estate, my health, my Reputation, &c? conscience answers, spake I not unto thee, saying, Do not Sin against the light, and thou wouldest not heare; therefore behold that also is required.

(a) Gen  
42. 21

Whatsoever be the *Instruments*, the Lord is *Righteous*: The *stroke* is straight, though the *stick* be crooked; the *Equity* of his dealings is always *visible*, though the *Reason* is not; his *Righteousness* is like the great mountains, when his *Judgments* are a great deep (b). Though *Sin* be not always the *particular Reason* why he Afflicts us, yet there's suf-

(b) Psal.  
36 6.

C4

ficient



## An Infallible way

ficient *cause* for it on Account of *Sin*. He never strickes, but he strickes a *sinner*, that deserves greater then he suffers. Without him *I* am nothing, *I* have nothing, *I* can do nothing, *I* deserve nothing, *I* am worse then nothing; there would be no loss of me if *I* came to nothing. *I* cannot date my *Afflictions* from the first day of my *pollution*, or of my Enjoyment of his Blessings. There are that have never a good day in all their lives; not a day of health, gladness, honour; among all their days of sickness, sadness, and Reproach, My Sufferings are not so many as my sins, as my mercy's, as God may Exercise me with, as have befallen others, as my Saviour's, as the Joys of Heaven.

Instead of complaining of so many *Evils*, *I* may well be thankfull *I* Receive no more, who have deserved

serv'd so much; and account every thing a *favour* on this side *Hell*; Blessed be God, he hath left me any thing, when all was at his service. He sets down *fifty* for a Hundred: his severest dispensations are mercyfull Abatements of Sin's just demerit. When my case is most sad, it might be much worse; He breakes the staff of my *outward comforts*, he might take away my *inward cordialls*: He Afflicts the *Body*, he might wound my *conscience*. This *cross* might have been a *curse*. He Ruins my Estate, he might Remove himself; lops off the Branches, he might cast Root and Branch, *Body* and Soul into the Fire. We are Troubled on every side, yet not distressed: perplexed, but not in dispaire: persecuted, but not forsaken: Cast down, but not destroy'd: pained, but not damned:  
holden

## An Infallible way

holden in the cords of Affliction,  
 but not under chaines of darkness.  
 Were it Death, he is not yet come  
 to the *End* of his *Rod*: The worst  
 we can *feel here*, is not the Thou-  
 sand part of what we have *deserv'd*  
*hereafter*. He visits our Trans-  
 gressions with Rods, and our Ini-  
 quities with stripes, when he might  
 chastise us with Scorpions, and take  
 his loving kindness utterly from us.  
 Whats a paroxifime of the gout, or  
 stone, to rouling on the scald-  
 ing Billowes of his Eternal ven-  
 geance? a feaver, a sick Bed, to a  
 Bed of Flames, where the firt never  
 goes off, the worm never dyes,  
 the fire is not quenched? If he  
 will not alwayes chide, neither keep  
 his Anger for ever, he deales not  
 with us after our Sins, nor Rewards  
 us according to our Iniquities.  
 Let it for ever check all quarrellous  
 passionate reasonings against him,  
 who

who inflicts but temporal punishments, that might make us Eternally miserable ; corrects us with the Rod of affliction, who might as justly Break us with a Rod of Iron, and dash us in pieces like a potters vessell.

## *Encouragement from the Sovereignty of God.*

CONsider his Independent, Absolute, unlimited *Sovereignty* ; Discontent under Sufferring, is a striving and contending with God ; opposeing, and controlling his dealings as unequall and unadvised ; charging him with *Tiranny*, as if he went out of the way of justice when he treads over our line, and transgresses the Bounds we have set him. It argues, we would (if we could) reveng our selves upon Him, because we give way to that passion



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passion that prompts to reveng.  
 But, may we that *made not*, govern  
 and dispose of our selves? or chuse  
 our station, more then we did, what  
 creatures we would be? Is it not fitt  
 we should be at his finding and or-  
 dering, whose *workmanship* we are?  
 and as Intirely render up our selves  
 unto *his will*, as we proceeded from  
*it*? Is not his Interest and dominion  
 infinitely more absolute then ours  
 over our selves, and ours? may he  
 not *doe what he will with his own*?  
 Ungrateful wretches we are, to  
 be more sensible of the *loss*, then  
*Enjoyment* of what he freely lent  
 us for so long as he should think fitt:  
 To complain of that as our *Injurie*,  
 which is but *Restitution* of what he  
 made us not so much as a *lease* for  
 any *set Terme*, without a clause of  
*Revocation* at *pleasure*. The grea-  
 test *Monarchs* hold their crown and  
 Kingdome of him *Incapite*, and may  
 be

be turn'd out at pleasure, at less then  
an hours warning. Do we look upon  
the owner and keeper, as if he came  
to rob us when he calls it in, and not  
rather dismiss it with Thankfullness  
for lending it us so long? whose will  
should take place? whose *pleasure*  
should be procur'd? Henceforth (my  
Soul) *deny thy self*, or deny thy self  
to be a *creature*. Be wholly at *his dis-*  
*pose*, or call him not *thy Sovereign*.  
He *will do* what he *ought*; He *can*  
do thee no *wrong*. If he send, say  
not, what do ye? losing my life, or  
livelyhood. Tis even as the Lord  
hath commanded, and straight way  
let it go. Let there be no strife  
between thee and him; between  
thy will and his, for he is thy *Sove-*  
*raign*. Is not the whole Land be-  
fore thee? hast not thou enough,  
too much Roome already in other's  
Breasts? Separate thy self I pray  
thee from me, and I shall behold  
all the plaines of my lowest estate,  
even as the garden of God. We

## An Infallible Way

We can never have any Settled peace, till we commit our selves quietly to him. *Safety* is furthest off from those, who so little esteem *his will*, that they prefer *their own* before *it*. Let him see we can as composedly rest our selves upon him, as if it were in our own hands to do what we list; which is the only way to *please him*, and *we* can never be *pleased*, unless we think that *he* is *so* too. It is our own will and desire it should be with us as it is; or we fearfully dissemble with God, when we say, *Thy will be Done*; and are we discontented that we have *our will*? that our *prayers* are *Answered*? can there be any thing in the *will* of God, his servants should inordinately fear; the fulfilling of which, is the care, desire, and business of their lives? every *Commission* is signed originally in Heaven, and God will  
not

not set *his hand* to any thing thats really *hurtfull* to *his Children*.

Men are but pursevants, ministers of his permissive providence to put it in Execution. He *will's* that in righteousness and judgment, which they act with so much malice, cruelty, and Injustice. Let him alone, the Lord hath bid him curse *David* (c). Which may well make us friends, at peace, in perfect charity with second causes: to be so much in love with the will of our Heavenly Father, as even to fall in love with whatsoever serves it; viewing them all in his hand, readily doing his pleasure. Tis a childish, currish thing, to beat the Rod, or bite the stone. We will rather admire and delight in their Subserviency to him, then maligne their severe influences upon us. Why Repine you at injuries, Reproaches, or Sickneses? why trouble

(c) 1 Sam.  
16. 11.



## An Infallible way

trouble ye the persons? They have wrought a good work; its an *Arrest* served out of the Court of Heaven against me to Execute *His will*; it hath an Errand to me from *Him*; How could they come except they were sent? All Distempers are part of that running Camp which march under his Standard; advance and retire under his Shaddow of his command. The voice of my Disease is, Am I come up hither without the Lord to Afflict thee? the Lord hath said to me, go up against this man and Afflict him (d). Beggars must not be choosers; He's a presumptuous Child, that will make choice of his own Rod. He deserves to be Casheer'd, to have his name blotted out of Christ's Muster-roll, who is not ready cheerfully to March through all ways and weathers to accomplish his General's designe: To follow him murmur-  
ring

(d) If. 36.  
10.

ring, is all one as if we stay'd behind. If we bear our Burdens with a perpetuall vexation, we deprive our selves of the crown of patience, the value whereof is inestimable, as the force of it hath been judged in all times invincible, and made the *prosperous*, envie others *sufferings*. Every minute of our tranquillity is purchas'd with patience: he that is sincere and patient, cannot miss of joy. He that shrinks from, and murmurs under his Burden, on his Death-Bed will remember, that, by that time all his sorrow's had been past, and nothing Remaining for him but rest and reward: others suffer more, only the the patient receive the advantages and recompence of christian suffering.

The unquiet Estuations of our Hearts, are their unmannerly Replies against God. I see his Hand

D

at

at the bottom of the *Warrant*, that keeps the *Peace* in my Breast; and makes mee not concern'd what I Suffer, but how much I make of it, and shall Receive for it; not to strive so much against *Affliction*, as *Displeasure*: Removing punishment may leave a greater, though insensible, in its Room. He shall not offend me with punishment, so he punish me not with offending him. It may admit a Question, whether it be a more admirable Christian exercise to doe Good, or to endure Evil. Doing, is but one part of my work, I must suffer the will of God, which I may with more carefulness, because I can only in this life: let me suffer his Will while I may, I shall but a while: but Eternally do it without Suffering, where my *Passive*, as well as my *Active Obedience*, shall be Remembred and Rewarded. The Almighty's Sequestrations, are

are but better Compositions : I know all shall work together for my good ; therefore, if it be for good, let this Cup pass from me ; if it be for good, let it remain with me, till thou hast purged out my Corruptions, perfected my Patience, beautified my Faith, strengthened my Dependance, raised me entirely from all earthly Delights to Heavenly.

O ! when shall I have done Quarelling, and Murmuring ? Fretting, and Repining ? Carking and Caring ? When shall I be Humble and Meek, Conformable and Silent, Contented and cheerfully Compliant ? When shall I not out of necessity, or with reluctancy, but choyce, not only submit, but assent to, and justifie thee in all thy Dispensations ? Not only hear and accept of the Rod, but kiss it ; look up, Adore, and think worthy



## An Infallible Way

thoughts, and honorable of Thee? When shall thy interest be so wholly planted and Establisht in my Soul, as none other may be able to grow there? when shall I quiet all self ends, and be freely at the disposal of thee. Reckon, and endeavour it as my only interest to serve thy Will; my greatest perfection to be nothing in myself, to have nothing of my owne distinct from thee, to commit all to thee, to be great in thee, to be filled with thee; not to reckon any thing I have, but dispise it in comparison of thee, live to and for thee, enjoy all things as in and under thee?

Behold, I stand here ready for thy Service; I am prepared for any imployment; I am girt for any Encounter: Doe with me what thou wilt; raise me, or depress me; lift me up, or throw me down; lead me to the right Hand or the left;

Left; turne me to what side thou pleasest, I am thine and at thy disposal: Thou hast lent me to, but not for my self. If Thou wilt Afflict me, afflict me; if thou wilt try me, try me, if my patience must serve thee in poverty; if my disgrace must Glorifie truth; if my shame must Honour my God; my poverty shall be my Riches, my disgrace shall be my Honour, my shame shall be my Glory, my affliction shall be my Happiness, my service shall be my Reward. Use me as thou pleasest, so thou use me to thy Glory; and so I am sure thou wilt, for otherwise thou canst not doe. Thou canst not deny thy own Glory, and therefore thou canst not governe *me* Amiss, who always esteemes my self well used where I serve thy Honour in the World, though in the lowest Office, or highest Affliction. I sub-

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mit to thy Direction ; I follow thee without reply or delay ; for what shall I get by resistance, but to be drag'd weeping, and to bear, being evil, what I might doe sincerely by becoming good.

*Encouragement from the Wis-  
dome of God.*

CONsider his infinite *Wisdom*, whereby he distinctly knowes all things past, present and to come. All obscure Administrations which seem so full of casual neglect, promiscuous scattering, and wild contingences, is no disorder to him, but an admirable contrivance and regularity. The thoughts of men, the hearts of Kings are in the hands of God. By his certain dispose, there's a *necessity* in every seeming undermin'd casualty (e). He who is unawares accidentally

(e) Gen. 21. 13, 14  
Isa. 9. 15.  
16,

dentially slain by another, is delivered into his hands by God (f). <sup>(f) Ex. 21.13</sup>  
 An Arrow shot at randome, was diverted by him to fullfil the prediction of *Ahab's* death, (g) amidst <sup>(g) I Kin. 22.34.</sup>  
 popular Tumults, Inundations, Commotions, and publick Confusions, the Lord Reigneth; let the Earth Rejoyce. Though things seem hudled together, and to run at randome, there's a *Wheel in a Wheel*, and in them the Eye of providence, that with deliberate care and forecast, directs them in their turnings and revolutions, to the best and most certain Issue.

Which may justly check our extravagant thoughts, that would either presume to know all the reclusive ends of Omniscience, or peremptorily judge of the fitness of meanes to ends unknown. And may reduce us (discomposed) to composed minds, notwithstanding



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standing all Changes, Alterations, or seeming Confusions: To conclude *that Oeconomy* wisest that's chosen by a *Wisdom* so *Boundless* that can at once survey all expedients, and so *unbyassed*, that it hath no interest to chuse any but for its being *fittest*. The great *Physician* of Mankind knows their various Tempers and distempers; weighs and measures out the quality, quantity, and duration of their Sufferings; diets and orders them as he sees most behoveful for Recovery or Prevention. Is too *compassionate*, too *Wise* to let his *distracted Patients* prescribe their own course of Physick, or have their clamorous will; or to decline our fond and peevish cavils, shuffel and discompose those misterious profound contrivances, whose *Wisdom* engages the Attention, and enacts the Wonder of Angels.

How

How long then (my Soul) will it be ere thou make an end of murmuring words? mark, and afterwards (if thou canst) speak on. Shall God alter the methods of his governing the World, to humour and comply with ignorant inconstant Man? Shall the Earth be forsaken for thee? Shall the Rock be removed out of its place (e. Shall the Ax lift up it self against him that heweth therewith? (e) Job. 18.2. &c.

There's a Jest indeed; He that formed the intellectual Eye, shall not he see? He that made intelligent Spirits, shall not He Understand? He looks upon all the World at once; sees what reference one part hath to another; and disposes the affaires of particular Nations, and Persons (how fatal soever calamities and their consequences may be to them) as may serve and Attaine his great Designe. He

## An Infallible way

He Overlooks *Satan's Conclave*, what evil designs are Hatched and plotted against his People; and can not only frustrate their utmost Policies and Endeavours, but make them frustrate themselves, to accomplish those very ends they were design'd to defeat: So that what they seek to decline, they promote by their striving against; and that very conspiracy that brings them together, affects what they conspire to prevent. Limit not *God* to *meanes*; let him choose his own Weapons to fight his own Battle: so long as he hath a *Cause* in the World, *He* can never want *Ways* to maintain *it*, who by his *Death* conquered all his Enemies; and the kingdoms of the Earth with one File of poor Fisher-men, whose greatest Art and Policie lay in mending their Nets, and laying snares for the filly

ly *Fish*. The Churches Enemies cannot approve themselves so malicious as they are; he sometimes so holds them in, that standers-by, think them favorable; it is in the power of my hand (saith *Laban* to *Jacob*) to do you hurt; but the God of your Father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou head that thou spake not to *Jacob* either good or bad (i). Thank him (i) Gen. 21.29. for nought, he could do him hurt; but God would not let him. Let *Men* use what meanes they please, He hath still the severity of the End. Who ever *Rules*, he *Overrules*, and will prevent; or order disorders. Look we to our Station, and God will look to the Helm. He hath a greater venture of Glory in the Church's Welfare, then Men can have, and is fighting for, while he seemes to fight against his People; Answering



## An Infallible Way

ring their Prayers, whilst he seems to Reject them.

And shall we have so fond regard to our selves, as not to be content, that the wisdom of God, should serve his own turne in managing all? be so narrow, private spirited, as to expect all his providences in governing the world, should center in our present, particular conveniency, and Happiness? Humane events, and severall persons interests, are so interwoven by him, that they have a mutuall dependance among themselves; and their meetings, which we think casuall, are twice necessary, as his decree, and for many ends. We must consider our selves as peices of the universe, and Engines, which that great work-man Sets on going for executing his ends; which being all good, all means tending to them,

them, must also be so. We must therefore bear our crosses, not only with patience, but joy and thankfulness, as happy, we are instruments in his hand to do his work, and advance his glory; which must needs highly please him, doing that willingly, others do out of constraint. How great an evil is discontent with our allotment? By desiring to have our will in *such a particular*, we perhaps should cross God in a *Thousand* He hath to bring about; because, tis possible a *Thousand* things may depend upon that one thing we would have to be otherwise then it is. I will be henceforth willing to be crossed in some few things, that his work may go on in *all*; and his end attain'd or furthered in many things, by the one thing I am crossed in. Tis impossible every Humour should be satisfied, because

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because, particular desires, besides their opposition to one another, are inconsistent with the general designe. That difference which there is between particular things, times, and persons, much conduces to the Beauty, and conveniency of the whole; while some particular events, singly considered, seem prejudiciall. The whole contexture of affairs in their operation, shall prove in the issue, for the best to those that love God.

Wish events according to the secret order of the grand disposer, looking on all not as casualties, but commands, and thou shalt allwayes have thy will. Nothing can fall out contrary to it, if thou totally denyest it, and transforms it into his; and desires no more in thy Heart then thou mayest law fully ask of him in Prayer. He will satisfie *our will's*, when we can submit to *His*; not

not easily deny our sute, when we can deny our selves. None stay longer at Heaven's gate, then he who will be serv'd at first knock. He speeds best who delivers in his petition, and stays until God please to answer. We often shorten our mercys, by hastening them: He doubles them by delaying, and makes us amends both for our prayers and patience.

No *Policy* can provide against all events, but *that* which advises us to forsake the place where they are, and so carry us up, out of our selves, and our own will's into the will of God, where all is a perfect serenity, lye down in peace and concord together. To such there is no enemy, nothing is contrary; all things serve them, and fall out to them as they would; having no will of their own, referring all things to the will of  
God;



## An Infallible way

God; to them there is no death, or slavery, but to sink down thence, and be engaged in carnall uncertaine designs and interests.

Shall I say thats *too little*, which infinite wisdom thinks enough? or disorderly hasten towards enlargement, instead of patiently waiting the Lords leasure? should he spread before me all this worlds treasure, and bid me take what I would, could I do more wisely then put the choyce to him again, and beseech *Him* to chuse for me who loves me better, and knows better whats best for me, then *my self*? And shall I not *now* then thankfully stand to *his Choyce*? We will henceforth be Cheerful, and contented in our present Alotment: If every thing be best which he Appoints, why are we troubled, as if things went not well with us? its Impossible it should

should have been better with us  
then it is; it had not been well, if  
it had been otherwise. All things  
are ordered by *his* deliberate coun-  
sell and fore-knowledg, *who* is as  
exactly carefull of *me*, as if he had  
none other to look after: and suf-  
fers no trouble to befall me be-  
cause he doth not regard; for his  
care and providence extends to  
every creature; or because he can  
not or will not help, for he is e-  
qually infinite in all his attributes;  
but because his wisdom finds  
that condition fittest for me. Had  
I more of the world, I might have  
less of grace. Though my com-  
mons be short, it should certainly  
be otherwise if he saw it better.  
If I have not what I desire, I have  
what I ought to desire.

Querelous wranglings, fullen dis-  
contents, disturb not my satis-  
faction and repose. I will desire  
E and

## An Infallible Way

and will just so, and no otherwise then thou doest, Omniscient, omnipresent, only wise *God*, whose goodness designs my wellfare, and whose wisdom manages that design. I would rather have that to be which already is, then any thing else. That's better which *thou wilt's*, then *I*. Thou consultest well and wisely about it ; knows what use to make of thy creatures, and where 'tis most fitt to bestow them, and wilt dispose me there where most necessary, and best for me ; and suffer no *Evil* to befall me, unless for some greater *Good*. I venture all with thee ; I freely refer all to thee in the particular disposition of my self and mine. Grant me, not what I crave, but what thou knowest good to give me. Take from my *Punishment*, or add to my *patience*. Lessen my Burden, or strengthen my shoulders.

## to Contentment.

51

ders. All *Bestness* depends upon the *wisest goodness*. I will refuse nothing which seems good unto thee; and more willingly consent to *that* thou wouldest have, then to my own Inclination. Put me into what condition, use me as, lead me whither thou plearest; chuse my rayment and provision for me: Sicknes or health, respect, or disgrace; plenty, or poverty, I will not only consent, and submit unto, but make it my business to vindicate, appologize, and maintain these thy dealings with me, to be most fitt and prudent, most futable and Advantagious to me.



*Encouragement from the Goodness of God.*

Consider the *Love, Mercy, and Goodness of God.* The divine *Ev' Son's* The self-moving propensity and good pleasure of his will, first turned the heart of God, and combin'd his attributes into a federall association to work all one way for the good of Beleevers. All his providences acted upon the stage of the world, are but severall manifestations of it, in different dresses and disguises. Instruments of cruelty are not in his habitation. He shaves us with a *Razer* that is hired (k). And when he causes grief, hath compassion. He pittyes, where others despise; He is concern'd, where men are careless; He fixes his Eye, and opens his ear, where a proud creature hath  
neither

(k) Ifay.  
7.20.

neither eye to see, nor ear to hear. The poor are not forgotten by Gods love: He respects the meanest *Artizan* equally with the greatest *Potentate*. He flights not the helpless oppressed: That which is a good cause in it self, is allways so to him, be it whose it will. Whole mountains of gold fly up in the Ballance in his hand, against a grain of justice. He judges every mans right. He sees and pitties the afflictions of the miserable: He heares the cryes of the indigent. The sighs of the prisoner in the deepest vault sound in his Bowells: He whispers comfort to the dolefull; moans deserve commiseration.

What means then those scruples of his kindness, these struglings under our Burden? why are we so prone to look on him with blood-shotten Eyes in the ruin of his  
E 3 creatures;

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Creatures, as if he were some austere, tyrannicall being; apter to affright and terrify, then allure and attract us; and had only sanguin laws, writ with the Blood of his subjects? why must the smart of the Flesh, pervert the judgment of our minds? the feeling of bodily evils, destroy all sense of his unchangable goodness? what? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Indeed, we shall whether we will or no; but shall we not (kiss the hand, and) *Receive it so, i.e.* in the same manner, with the same mind as we receive *good*? with heart, and hand, cheerfully, thankfully, gladly? with much reverence, veneration, and respect to God, and his ways of providence towards us? This were an absurd thing

thing once to imagine; a blind man may see this; tis so plain, a Fool may understand it: The reason lyes all in sight, that we should *thus* receive *evill* from the donor of all our *Good*; the least part of which we have not deserv'd, but much more then all the *evill* we suffer; and welcome him as well, when he comes to take, as give; carve contentment out of every Dish set before us; cheerfully digest the hardest fare; bless God full of fasting. Shall we not eate the crust with the crum?

*Laugh we to lick the sweet, and shall we lower?*

*If God be pleas'd to send a little showre?*

Shall we not receive an *Imaginary evill*, from whom we receive so much *Reall Good*?



## An Infallible way

we grumble, if he gratifie not a particular appetite, who loads us with his benefits? childishly throw down all, if he give us not that peice we would? murmur under one affliction, and over-look a Thousand mercies? forsake the enjoyment of so many blessings, to pine away in the company of our wants? neither look forward to his future, nor backward to his past benefitts? set we our present sickness and sorrows, against our former health and comforts; and Impartially compare the mercies we enjoy, with the miseryes we undergo; and our consolations will be found much more to abound then our sufferings.

Let us therefore be more careful to keep a reckoning of the goods we *enjoy*, then we have *lost*; and entertain more joy we had them

them so long, then sadness we  
lost them so soon: so shall we  
make Ill days good, by a thank-  
full remembrance of good dayes  
past, and obtain of him new mat-  
ter of thanks. Useing the world  
as a Feast, soberly, cheerfully,  
feeding on the fare set before  
us; and when tis taken away,  
Rise and give thanks; and not  
be such ungratefull guests to the  
master of the Feast that hath so  
Liberally treated us, as to re-  
ckon all past for nothing, but  
grudg when he takes away, in-  
stead of thanking him for his  
good cheere. Shall we mak ear-  
nest sute to him when we would  
*Borrow*, and be offended with  
him when we are call'd to *pay*?  
Hee's an Inn; an unthankfull *Deb-*  
*tor*, from whom the *lender* cannot  
ask *His own*, but shall be like  
thereby to lose a *Friend*. Lets  
cast

## An Infallible way

cast our eye upon what we *have*, and could not well be *without*, as well as upon what we *fain would have*, but *may want*; and consider how *usefull* the things we already have, are; how *Ill* we could *spare them*; how *much worse* we should be, then now we are *without them*; how *many want them*; how *thankfull they* would be for *them*; Then will no room be found for murmuring. I have made an *Ill use* of thy *mercys*, if I have not *Learn'd* to be content with thy *Corrections*; and be not so *thankfull* for *past favours*, that the *memory* of *them* be able to put away the *sense* of *present miseries*. Considering the *good* I *undeservedly enjoy*, and the *Evill* I have not, but *deserve*, and others groan under: I will reckon every *Evill* I am free from, so many new *favours*

*favours, easie Corrections among my Blessings, and any Blessings Infinitely obliging. And Trust God in all conditions; and Rejoyce in that Trust; and Hope even against Hope; and be content in the greatest streights, when theres nothing visible that should give Contentment; content to do well, and suffer Ill; To be neglected and despised where we deserve Honour and Advancement; To be Poor, without advantages of growing Rich; To be Sick and afflicted without Hopes of recovering Health and Felicity in this world; to see our Friends wrong'd, our Enemies prosper, our Estate decay, and our charges Increase. All things permitted, or acted by him, are the result of the most perfect wisdom and goodness; though short-sighted creatures cannot see it; and shall work together*



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together for our good, (so long as we keep close to our sovereign good) To heal, or quicken; try, or discover; sanctifie, or prepare; The fruit of Infinite love, and Tryall of ours. *Afflictions*, are *Federall dispensations*; not so much *Threatned*, as *promised* to Christ's seed (1); And, *sanctified*, better then *removed*. There's not a *Trouble* we meet with we can be without, but hath its place and work in that frame and design God hath ordained to bring us to glory. It had been far worse with us if they had not befallen us; some Positive sadder griefe had ceased on us; or we should not been capable of enjoying so much Happiness in this, or the next world.

(1) Psal.  
89 32.  
Heb. 12.  
6. &c.

Had I been *Rich*, I might been *Covetous*, *Prodigall*, *Luxurious*; If *Honorable*, proud, *Tyrannicall*,  
Ambitious;

Ambitious; If in *Health*, soft, Effeminate, dainty, sensuall. Had he not by some *Affliction* prevented me, or caused me to retreat, I had run too far in the prosecution of secular pleasures or profits. Or, he lays it on me, to try the strength and vigour of my mind; To call forth and exercise patience, fortitude, trust, and confidence in him; my fidelity, and loyalty to him: To make me more circumspect, not only free from notorious faults, but more perfectly virtuous and good: To commend, set off, and sweeten my future good things; to make the relish of them more sweet and pleasant.

I will henceforth set no other price on things, then as they relate to my true end and Interest. Let me be allwayes under the care and skill, the wholsom discipline

## An Infallible Way

discipline of such a *Tutor* and *Physician*, my mind shall keep even pace with thee; nor shall thy will be ever different from my free choyce. *Answer* the necessity of my *Health*, not the *Importunity* of my *Appetite*. Take my *Soul's* part against my *Enemie's*, not *theirs* against my *Soul*. Give me poverty and Sicknes, rather than not grace to use riches and Health: If I want them, thou requirest not what thou givest not; If I have them, and want the use, thy *mercy* proves my *Judgment*. Let affliction be my portion, so contentment, Love to thee, Acquiescence in thy will, fortitude of mind, and universall Ammendment be the use and Interest, eternal felicity will then be the Issue, event and purchase.

*Encouragement from the Providence  
of God.*

Consider the *Providence* of God,  
The continual exercise of his  
wisdom, power, and goodness,  
whereby he observes, supports, and  
governs all creatures, actions, and  
events, with their particular cir-  
cumstances, in such a way as is  
most suitable to their natures;  
Immediatly, to their proper ends;  
Remotely, to the order and or-  
nament of the universe; especially  
to the good of his elect, ultimately  
to his own glory. He makes not  
the world by his power, and then  
cares not whether it stand or fall.  
He Employed not infinite wisdom  
to Build an *House*, and then sent  
chance and folly to dwell in it.  
He that made it, Inhabits and  
governs it: Is as much concern'd



to conſerve, as create: That which was worthy making, is worthy preſerving. He cannot but ſee every thing, being every where preſent, at Hand: Tis no diverſion, no trouble to him, to govern and rule All he ſees. There is *need* of him in all places, and over all things. He is *no where* without an *Interest*, or without *Business*. He is *owner* every where, in the poſſeſſion of what he hath made, and Ingages himſelfe in his own poſſeſſion. He cannot deſert his own Handy-work. The common *Father* of all the world, muſt be concern'd in the lives, Actions, and affaires of his children.

Mat. 6.  
35.

*Take therefore no thought for your Lives*]. Uſe all Lawfull endeavours after; prudently manage *preſent Enjoyments*, and leave the *Reſt* to Him. Undertake all with

a quiet mind, Resign'd to his disposal, without doubtful, fearful, Anxious *Thoughts* about *future things*, [ *saying, What shall we Eat? What shall we Drink? or wherewithal shall we be Cloathed?* ] which way shall I support my Family? how shall I feed these empty Bellies? how shall I cover so many naked Backs? will the Finger of Providence Toyle or Spin for me? shall I be fed with a Raven's bill? will the Clouds drop down Mannah for me? Alas, I find my Charges encrease, and my Estate diminish; large Payments, and slender Incomes, less than a *Miracle* cannot Retreive me, and the time of Miracles is now past; I, or mine must Perrish through Contemned Poverty. Why, be not wanting in *thy Duty*, and He will not be wanting in *His Providence*. Do not Forfeit his *Goodness, Bounty,*

F ty,

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ty, and *Protection*, and He will not fail exercising them towards thee. Expect all your supplies from him: Who cloaths the Lillies of the field? Who imps the Sparrow's wings? Who feeds the young Ravens? Who preserveth Man and Beast? Whose tender Mercies are over all his works? Is not the *Life* more excellent, more valuable than *Meat*? and the *Body* than *Rayment*? Will he that granted us a *Being*, deny the Preservation of *it*, so long as he hath appointed it? suffer such a stately *Structure* to fall to decay for want of *Repair*? Lose that which is of so *great value* for want of Food and Rayment, so *little* in comparison of *Life*? 'Tis a greater thing to make, than maintain us: to bring us out of nothing, than to supply us when we have nothing: To *Cloath* us with flesh and skin, than with a Garment: To make

*Mouth*

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*Mouth*, than to find *Meat* for it. 'Tis so much more easie to give *Food*, then *Life*; and *Rayment*, then the *Body*; that He who was so kind, so able to do the *one*, is not unable, will not be backward, cannot be so cruel, but to do the *other*. He made nothing Casual, or to forsake it: His being a *Creator*, obliges him to be careful of his *Creatures*. They are all his *Pentioners*, have their meat at his great *Ordinary*: If he kept it not open, the whole world would instantly feel an universal *Famine*. He is no needy *House-holder*, nor takes more into his *Family* than he hath meanes to maintain: none in it are neglected by Him: The little *Ant*, the creeping *Worm* receives their *Almes* at his Hand. He never gave *Life*, but allowed *Conveniencies* for it. He that gives *Mouths*, will give *Meat*. He had never made us un-



derstand the way of Living, but that he intended to bless and succeed our endeavours. His first care in forming us, is an Argument of his future Providence over us.

*Behold the Fowls of the Aire* ] Consider seriously how they are Fed: of all Creatures, they seem to take least care for their food; many of them spend their whole lives, as it were in singing, without thought where to get their next Meal; you might be as chearful, and be fed. Were it not better to be *without Reason*, than to make use of it only for our *Vexation*? To be incapable of thinking of God, as Beasts and Fowls are, than to think on him, only to distrust & murmur against Him. We Feed *Domestick* Fowls about the House, but who feeds those that flye in the Firmament? that making

## to Contentment.

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making no Provision in Summer, should in all likely-hood starve in Winter; yet are then fattest, and thrive more than those Nurst by Mans care. They have no Repositories, yet never want; nor granaries, yet have store. They neither Sow nor Reap, yet eat and drink, and sleep quietly at night, and know not where to feed next; yet go out and find a Table furnished for them by their Creator, and your Heavenly Father. Will He that hath made such plentiful Provision for the necessary sustenance, convenience, and defence, relief, delight, and satisfaction of all Creatures, neglect his own Children? And shall He *satisfie* every living thing, and not his own Children, who may look upon all Creatures as the goods of their Father's House, feeding and providing for them? Are not

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you better, much better than they? Every one of you, than all they? one Heire, than all other Attendance? One Jewel, than all the common Vessels of the House? If He eye and regard every Sparrow, Birds of so little account that one cannot be valued; there is no mony so small, but is of price too great for it, are not *five of them sold for two farthings?* (m) Be confident He hath a singular care, a far more intimate affection for you, who cost him so dear; *not one of them is forgotten before God*, much more not any part of you, but even the *very hairs of your head are* (inter numerata) *all numbered*; much more the dayes of your lives. If He look to all my hairs, much more to my provision, and safety, the members of my body, the great moments of my *life and death*. If we have security,  
for

for that of which we keep no account, cut off, and cast away, (*pili non facio ne pilo quidem melius*) if every one be not only known to him, but so kept as it were by *Tale*, that His Enemies cannot pull off *one*, without his permission, but for it He calls them to a reckoning; how much more have we security of our Essential Parts, and that without which we cannot live?

*Which of you by taking thought, can add on Cubit to his Stature?* ] Stint, or Statute measure of Estate? without Him, all our thoughtfulness is as vain, as if a Dwarf should thereby think to acquire a tall mans stature. The most griping Worldling puts not up one penny, without a Ticket sign'd by his hand, to fetch it out of his publick *Exchequer*, whose is the Earth and the fulness thereof;



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If He *shut up that*, all Creatures break, and become Bankrupts. Turmoyling museings are additions to our fears, never further, often hinder our desires. He may justly curse our *present*, who distrust him for *future mercies*, and will not be satisfied with the fidelity of his providence.

*And why take you thought for rayment, consider the Lillies of the Field, how they grow without the Gardiners care or industry, they neither do the work of the man in toying without, nor of the Women, in spinning within doors; contribute nothing to their beautiful cloathing; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon (the Wi-sest, Richest of Princes,) in all his glory and magnificence, was not arrayed like one of them? The natural bravery of the Lilly, coming from its own fruitful Bowels,*  
is

is (as a beautiful, to a painted woman) beyond all the glory of apparel, that Art and Cost could bring *him*. All the Lillies of the Field are so deck'd and cloath'd as is not on *Solomon*, in all *his* glory. He puts more glory every day on *one flower*, then Skill and Wealth can on the greatest *Monarch*, in his greatest Splendor. His providential goodness extended to the Flowers of the Field, is beyond all that Man can do, by the utmost extent of his Wisdom, Power, and Riches.

Wherefore, if God *so* curiously *cloath*, not only the delightful flowers of *the Garden*, but *grass of the field* we tread on, of so little account, so short continuance, *which to day is, and to morrow cast into the Oven*, shall He not much more *cloath* you? of a more excellent Rank and Order, Frame  
and

and Structure, Appointment and End : are not your *Lives* more valuable, your Bodies more wonderful, your Souls more durable, your work more excellent, your final estate more considerable than *theirs* ? will *He* that so plentifully feeds the *Sparrows*, that have no granaries, so gorgeously cloath the *Lillies*, that have no distaff, make so rich, so glorious provision for such short-liv'd Creatures, *starve* those that rationally serve, that shall eternally enjoy him : for us who have such express promises, added to such instances of *his* providence, *who* takes more care for us, then for other Creatures, (n) to doubt of sufficiency (if not Riches) argues infidelity, and diffidence in God to admiration, *O ye of little faith.*

(n) 1 Cor.  
9.9<sup>e</sup>

The fear of want, is for want of obeying his command, *take therefore*

*therefore no thought for the morrow ; be not anxiously solicitous for future necessaryes ; saying, what shall we eat, or what, &c. 'tis your shame to imitate those you abhor as Infidels, and not to differ in Practice, as in Profession.*

*For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, [as if themselves, not God were to provide for them. This studious, busie, earnest enquiry, is more befitting Heathens, who have no lively apprehension of God, his providence, Fatherly care, and Love ; then you, who acknowledge and experience them. 'Tis for poor Orphans to Cark and Care, to shift as well as they can for themselves ; but with you the case is quite otherwise : either disclaim God for your Father, or rest confident of his Fatherly provision ( for your Heavenly Father knowes you have need of all these,*  
(ne-



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(*necessary*) things. ] What he first gave, and is still needful for you; that *life* and the *body* cannot subsist without *Food* and *Rayment*; tis enough for a *Father*, that he know's his Childrens wants, and his reproach, to neglect them. We have nothing to do but to believe, obey, and rejoyce we are in his hands, to whose care we have left the ordering of all our concerns. He will be sure to supply those wants which are of his own making; you may as well question whether he *knows*, as whether he will *supply*. According to the singular degrees of love, are his peculiar intensions of care, and forecast, help and assistance; *Providence* is special, where *love* is singular. He will not suffer himself to be outdone by the kindness and bounty of his own Creatures, who are so

ten-

tender of their off-spring ; *Tam Pater , tam pius nemo.* He that gave us so great a blessing , as *Son-ship*, when we were *Enemies*, Children of the Devil, will much more give us so small a blessing as *Food*, now we are his *Sons*. He made us so needy, not because He was niggardly, but bountiful ; not because He was not *good*, but would be alwayes *so* to us ; not that we should be poor, and want these things, but humble, and alwayes go to Him and have them : not to make us miserable , but that we should still remember Him, crave, and expect supplies from Him, depend upon Him, and not be able to live without Him. We are *his charg*, He stands intrusted with us , *who* is alwayes faithful to those whom He takes into his care. The provident care of my Heavenly Father, forbids  
the

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the care of diffidence in Him, and requires the care of diligence in my self : to interest my judgment in the choise and use of means, but to keep my affections disinterested, unconcern'd in the event. To *serve*, but not *mis-doubt his providence*, while I imploy my *own*. Solicitousness about the issue of our lawful endeavours, derogates from Him, as if He would not, could not, knew not how to help us. We cannot put upon him a greater wrong, then the alienation of our *Trust*, which he challenges as his peculiar ; if plac'd on any Creature, we Deifie it, we take upon us, what is proper to Him : and tis no less a fault and folly, to invade *Gods part*, then to neglect *our own*. O, Let my care be to depend on thee, as thine is to provide for me, and I cannot want.

*But*

*But seek ye first* (before, and above all) *the Kingdom of God* as the end, and *his righteousness* as the way, and all necessities in it, to it, shall be added unto you. Let your principal care be to approve your selves my obedient, dependent Children, and you are secured of maintenance, in your minority, as well as of your inheritance, when you come to Age. There is Bread as well as Grace, and Cloathing, as well as Righteousness in the promise (o), godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, &c. As certain, concerning Food and Rayment, as remission of sins, and eternal life. If He give grace and glory, He will withhold no good thing. Be our heart honest, our hand diligent, our desires moderate, our Souls believing, and we shall not fail of a supply of the needs of our

(o) 1 Tim.  
4.8.



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our Bodies, which is the just measure of our wants. Take upon you the *care* of *duty*, and leave all *others* to God. He will surely mind our good, if we faithfully discharge our duty; we shall find Him answering us, in what we look for from Him, in doing what He expects from us. Can we have so mean thoughts of Him, as to think we should intend his glory, and not He much more our good? That He should neglect us, doing the things that are pleasing in his sight? It is *distrust* in Him, to be troubled for what is future; *impatience* against Him to be troubled for what is past, or present. This temper of Spirit finds fault with his Wisdom, blames his Goodness, depresses his Power, reprehends his Faithfulness, which are all engaged for our provision; and security in his way: shall

shall not He that saved our Souls from death, deliver our Bodies from the dangers of this World? His dealings with us are all love and mercy, and faithfulness. He gives all his Children so much as He sees sufficient for them; in an especial manner His grace to fear Him, contented Spirit to submit to Him, believing hearts to depend upon Him, His blessing with all their enjoyments. He will preserve us from *Evil*, or the *Evil* of it, proportion, and bless it to us: comfort, support us under it, and deliver us out of it.

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of it self ]*  
rest satisfied with your present allowance, without being solicitous for the future, or fearful of evils, when you feel none, impossibles concern not our desires, nor un-

G avoidables

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avoidables our fears ; nor things past remedy , our vexing sorrow. Desire not what thou canst not attain, nor fear what thou canst not prevent ; use the remembrance of past things, as instructive experiments, not renewers of thy torment ; nothing we can suffer from without, is worth one minutes disquiet of so noble a thing as the *Soul*, which then comes nearest its original, the nearer it comes to immutability. Relyance on God saves us from much sin and misery, whilst distrustful thoughts devour our peace, and leaves us nothing in the room, but fear, grief, and discontent ; all solicitous looking *beyond the present*, takes off so much from the *present content*. That providence that brings in the day, shall also bring new events, to comfort us, under all the evils of it ; let not the present have the charge

charge and burthen of the future also ; make your troubles as small, as short as may be : every dayes incumbrance is pain enough for all our patience, care enough for all our prudence, labour enough for all our diligence : *sufficient to the day, is the evil thereof.*

Why then by impatience and distrustful fore-thoughts , fruitless griefs for past, present, and projecting future evils, do we anticipate, increase, and lengthen them ? living in misery now, for fear we should hereafter : spending the *night* allowed for rest, with irksome apprehensions of the next *days-task* , worse then the task and burthen it self ? why are we so cruel to our selves, so ungrateful to God, that every suggestion of a possible danger or miscarriage shall Rob Him, and our selves too ? shall create more *Trouble,*



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then all our present comforts, *peace* and *thankfulness* : a Cloud no bigger then a Mans hand shall darken the whole face of Heaven it self ; hinder the light of reason, the prospect of faith, the sight of God and all his mercies, while we live at such a rate, where is our *reason*, quietly to enjoy the present good, while we disquiet our selves about those evils that are not, or may never be, or turn to our great advantage : where is that *faith* that should support us under the very greatest pressures, while we distrust God in our present ease, and plenty ? where is our *joy*, and *thankfulness* to Him for all his favours through our whole lives, while our impatient hopes the groundless fears and jealousies of our own fancies, extinguish the sense of his goodness, and make us as *unworthy* to Him,

as

as burthensome to our selves, we can no way so honour God, so ease our selves, as to commit all unto Him, mind our duty, without employing our thoughts about events, how easie then, how comfortable would our lives be : so lives the Child in his Fathers house ; so sleeps the Infant in it's Mothers arms, so lives the Saints and Angels of God ; this is the life that is liv'd in Heaven, without care, distrust, anxiety, under this assurance, that God will be the same to all Eternity, which He is at present to them.

# An Infallible Way

*Regulating our Desires and Opinions.*

**S**O uneasie and unquiet a thing is Man not raised above this unconstant State, that he suffers as many servitudes as the World hath changes. Every alteration abroad, makes another at Home; a Tyde of swelling or sinking affections within at every Ebb or Flow of things without. The mind is in such perpetual agitation, till escaped out of the whirle, and circuit of the Allurements and affrightments of this World, that He finds no peaceable corner in it. Whilest He that lives above it, looks down upon it in all its glory, with tryumph and contempt, and with the foot of scorn, spurns it into inconsiderableness; stands upright in the midst of ruines; endures torments with greater courage, then per-

persecuters threaten or execute them ; loses all earthly enjoyments with more cheerfulness then others enjoy them ; neither desires nor fears changes ; is the same whatsoever happens in his fortunes or affairs : his mind and estate, or matches ; hath learned to bear all injuries, disappointments, difficiencies, with an equal mind. *Qui desiderium suum clausit, cum Fove de felicitate contendit.* He is wise enough who knows himself, great enough who masters himself, rich enough who enjoys himself ; hath pleasure enough who pleases himself, happy enough who lives well. Tis almost impossible He should be oppress'd with sorrow, who serves God for Gods sake.

He hath most, not that strives to add to his Estate, or Reputation, but to subtract from his desires. Tis more eligible to be



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without them, then to need them. He is the *greatest Monarch* that hath little, and is satisfied, not that thinks he hath not what he should; what others have, what he might have, or, that grieves there is no more to have. He that's always *Craving*, is never *Contented*. If we would spare to desire, we might spare to have. There are few men so miserable that may not find satisfaction in themselves and their Condition, because it is in every mans power to terminate his *Desires*, whilst by *their* disorders we are induc'd to value more a future trouble or Evil, than a present repose or good. He is not *Happy* who hath all he desires, but who desires not what he hath not. Were there no other World, I would not be greedy after the great things of this, when 'tis far more easie to want them. Here would

I indulge my self the sensuality of a contented mind; the Luxury of an Ataxaxie, of an Indifferency as to all these things; of being quiet and untroubled by not having them; free from the hurry and disorder of them. He that hath once a competency, hath all the Contentment that is to be found in Temporal things; and experience will tell him, after a sufficiency once attain'd, Contentment will increase no more, though riches increase never so much. He can have no Enemy, who will be a Friend to all; nothing is able to cross him, who is disposed to take every thing well.

Nothing is enough to satisfy *Lust*, a little to suffice *Nature*, all the rest is but matter of *Opinion*. We pick our own sorrows out of others joys; Comparison more than Reality, makes us happy or miserable.

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rable. Many never found themselves in want, till discovered the abundance of others. Not necessity, but Ambition, and superfluity sets mens hearts upon the wrack. Had I all the world, I could enjoy no more than to Cloath and Feed me; the rest could please me no otherwise then by looking on, and I can thus sollace my self while it is anothers ; with the same mind behold their Riches and my own Poverty, and make as great a benefit of that , as they of their Increase : Whilst I am free from these *Black Phantasms* of *Cares* and *Fears* which leap on *Down-Pillows*, and pass through *splendid Pallaces*, to find out those pompous lives which have usually but the *Bark of Happiness*. They that seem to live so Happy, do not seem so to themselves, but by Times and Turns, have their griefs  
and

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and discontents. We find not Miseries so uneasie as we make them; while we not only endure the whole Affliction that troubles us, but encrease it by Repining at the envied Condition of others; fancying we are more unhappy than we should be, were we allowed to exchange that which troubles us, for any thing which doth not. Many of those we *Envy*, as thinking them far less *sufferers* than our selves, look with Envious eyes on us, and do but *dissemble* their grievances more handsomly than we, not find them more *easy* than ours; every one is as miserable, or as happy as he esteems himself. If we have not what we would, 'tis but (at worst) being contented with what we have; a sure means of discharging that Anxiety of mind, in respect of our Condition, or other  
mens,



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mens. If I possess not so great an Estate as many do, some of them perhaps (notwithstanding their abundance) enjoy less than I; as well as there are more who have not so much as either. We would willingly exchange Fortunes with many, but perhaps not by any one of those men on any Account. We judge of our own discontents, but know not how far they are exceeded in the same kind in others. Were every mans troubles publickly known, few but would bear their own burdens, rather than other mens. As our present Content is in the power of our Resolutions, so we have as much command of the future; and its but supposing the worst that we apprehend, or can happen to us, already come to pass. He easily bears adverse Fortune, who always expects it. Foresee the worst

worst Accidents, and all things will fall out prosperously. He that thus prepares himself, needs not fear his Tranquility of mind, since he resolves to give it himself.

That which troubles, or gives us Rest, is in our selves; if we be not quiet there, every thing without will make us miserable; if we be, nothing can. If we be sick, and are affraid to dye; in pain, and have no patience; scorn'd, and are proud; impoverisht, and are covetous, nothing can help us from being unhappy: But if we fear not death so much as an ill life, think impatience and murmuring a worse disease than the Gout or Stone; Pride the highest disgrace; Covetousness the basest Beggery, the greatest Poverty: If we die not unwilling, when we must die sooner than we would

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would ; lose not our patience with our health ; nor our constancy and chearfulness with our estate ; be not our own Enemy, when we have no Friend ; vex not our selves when others trouble us ; be not solicitous for to morrow too ; if we be Ill to day , we can feel no harme by death , or sickness , or scorne , or want .

Keep all well *within*, that no disorder put that out of order, and we are well. No man can make another a Slave , that hath not first Inslav'd himself. Be not Intrhal'd to Honour , or Disgrace, Pleasure, or Paine, Hope, or Fear, Life, or Death, and thou art free. Nothing can overcome Him that is not first overcome by his own Imaginations and Passions, false Opinions, unreasonable desires, fond affections, ungrounded expectations. A proud man hath no God ; an un-  
peace-

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peaceable man, hath no Neighbour; a distrustful man hath no Friend; a discontented man hath not himself. Those burdens that break a froward mans back, will not so much as break a silent mans sleep.

I have somewhat of the *best things*, I will with thankfulness enjoy them; and having Food and Rayment, take the rest as an over-plus, or want them with content. I never Will'd not to be Poor, not to be destitute of Relations, not to suffer Sicknes or Reproaches; *other things* are the matter of my choice, which no man, no Accident can forbid, or deprive me of. What should I fear, or be vexed at, who may always be what I should be? who need not be miserable unless I will? What cause have I to be displeased, who may always please God, and my self too? Men may make me suffer



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fer Torments, but not do a dishonest action; kill me, but not hurt me. I may be Poor, yet Just, and content: Ill spoken of, but still I can do well. Preservation from *Sin* is a greater mercy than Exemption from *suffering*. O *Pain*, in vain thou attempts me, so long as I can honestly bear thee, and have so much cause of joy for my healthful frame of Soul; that He hath cur'd me of my Lust and Avarice, Pride and Passion, Envy and Revenge, which disorder most mens *minds*, and are more formidable, pernicious Evils than those that distemper their bodies and thrust them into Hospitals. How should that make *me worse*, which makes not *my selfe worse*? 'Tis not in my power to be handsome, or witty, always rich, or in health; but it is to be good and virtuous; to have a health-

healthful, beautiful Soul; to be rich in good works; to turn Sick-ness and Poverty into Health and Riches; to make a bad Case good, and advantage by Losses.

Danger is better than Safety; a Storm, than a perpetual Calme, if before our fears we were the worlds, but after them, Gods. Who is a loser? that parts with his Friend, and gets God for his Father? Loses a bosome Companion, and dwells ever after in the Armes of God, and is inflamed with a greater Love of Heavenly things? If he withdraw some temporal Enjoyments, he will lessen my desires, or give in the more of Himself. He can croude a great deal of Comfort into a little of the Creature: Where the Possessions are lower, He can heighten the fruition, or himself be instead of them; therefore hath taken upon

H him

him the names of all other Comforts, to Intimate, that he is able to stand for all they signifie or are worth, our *Portion*, Inheritance, Habitation, high Tower, Sheild, Shaddow, Strength, Deliverer, Friend, Father, Husband, &c. whatsoever benefit or helpfulness we meet with in them, is to be found in a more excellent manner in him. We have Reason to *thank* the *World*, if it love us not; if it make us place our Comforts and Content in God, and a pure Conscience. They are *unkind*, whom we have oblidge; but we Repent not if we have done such ungrateful persons good, and hereafter place our Hopes and Expectations above. 'Tis they that injure me, not I that ought to be *troubled*, except for their sin, not my own suffering. Let us not, when there is no fault in the *Cause*,  
make

make one in the *Calamity*, since we ought rather to render double praise for our *Affliction*, and for our *Innocency* : when we are punished for our *Crimes*, we ought to have *Patience*, and when we suffer *Innocently*, we may well add *gladness* to it. Whatsoever is not pleasant may be useful ; so ought to be acceptable.

When I am unloaden of my Luggage, I am lighter for my *Journey* ; that calls me away to my true Riches, where my heart is already. Earth is not the place where I am to expect glory or greatness, I shall have enough *above* ; and *here* too ; so I can keep within my self, and look upon other things with an indifferent eye. A *Traveller* reckons of Storms and Rain, ill way, foul weather, hard entertainment, homely faire, strange usage ; is content with any

H 2                      thing



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thing, makes shift with every Inconvenience, minds not others sayings, doings, or possessions, as he passes on; some are chiding, others danceing, others plowing, others building, &c. whilst he's nor at leisure to think of any thing but his *Dear Country*: sets not his *Heart* on his *Inn* which he must leave next morn; seeks not for *Honours*, or *Offices* in it; all his care is, how he may pass safe, and well, and quietly; He hath *enough at Home*. Here we have Houses, as Foxes have Holes, and Birds of the Air have Nests to be chased and driven from them at pleasure; no continuing City, but we seek one to come: And who would not contentedly go through a Prison to a Palace? a barren Wilderness to a Land of Promise? Endure the Cross, & dispise the shame for the joy set before us? The days of mourning will be ere long over:  
 This

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This is but a step of Ill way. A pleasant Journey is dearly bought with the loss of Home.

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### *The Example of Christ.*

CONsidering our *great Exemplar of Suffering and Patience* ; how can we be *Impatient Sufferers* ? who can be troubled at *Want*, that Worship a God willing to live and die in sorrow ; his Mother not rich enough to bring a Lamb for an Offering, a few Barly Loaves and Fishes, Provision for his Train : or value *Esteem* when He was so undervalued, traduced, envied, followed with Reproaches, betrayed by his own Servants, put to Death by his Country-men ; his Tribute paid by a Fish ; his Triumph Solemnized by another Asses Colt ; Born among Beasts ; lived, if not upon Alms,

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among

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among Publicans ; dyed among Thieves : His Birth without a Cradle ; His Burial without a Rag, or Grave of his own ; and the price of his Blood buyes a Burial-place for Strangers. What lower degree of *Poverty*, than to take his beginning in a Stable ? to make his End on a Dunghill ? noysome and ignominious though the Carcasses and offences of the Executed ; where he offered a Sacrifice of sweet smelling favour unto God, and purchased glory unto men.

Why would'st *thou* not, whose is the Earth, and the fulness thereof, raise to thy self a Palace compiled of those pretious stones which lye hid in the close Coffer of that thy inferiour Treasury ? and command all the Potentates of the Earth to attend the Train with the glorious Retinue of blessed Angels ? Why did not thy stately Followers glitter in their shining

shining Liveries ? and the quintessence of all this worlds delicacies appear to furnish thy Table ? Since thou wouldest come down to our Earth, why would'st thou not enjoy the best entertainment it could give thee, but from the supereminent height of glory, stoop to Abase thy self to the sufferance of the extreamest Indignities; and sink thy self to the bottome of Abjectedness, to exalt our Condition to the contrary extreame ? How should we learn both to want and abound from thee, when abounding with the Glory & Riches of Heaven, would'st want a Lodging in the first welcome to the World ? How can it deject us to be Rejected of the world, which is none of ours, when *thou* came to thy own, and thy own Received Thee not ? what wonder for thy Servants to walk about in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented; when



their Lord is denyed Harbour, or safety for his Life? Why would'st thou be thus homely, but that by contemning worldly glory, thou mightest teach us to do so; and sanctifie Poverty unto them whom thou callest unto want? That since Thou, who had the choice of all Earthly Conditions, would'st be *Born* Poor, and *Live* dispised, those which must want out of necessity, might not think their Poverty grievous? none will have cause to complain of his course Robes, hard Bed, thin Table and Attendance, that calls to mind how it was with the great King. Those Idols of the worlds esteem, (Riches and Honour) are so far from making us truly happy, that they are not of themselves elligible in the number of good things. No man is to be ashamed of, or disquieted with Innocent Poverty, of which our Lord made Election; or worthy to be

be his Member that suffered so much for other mens sins, who cannot endure so little Affliction, if not for his sake, yet for his own. Delicate, tender, *Members* are undecent, unbecoming a *Head* stuck full of Thorns. Our heaviest Crosses are but Chips or Shavings to His.

If my *Head* but Ache, I lay it down on a soft Pillow to ease my pain, and lessen my grief; whilst thou hast no *Death-bed*, but a *Cross*; or *Boulsfer*, but of *Thorns* whereon to lay thy weak and wearied *Head*; no Cloaths to cover or shelter thee from the stormy cold. When I am Sick, my Friends about me bestir themselves to ease my Diseased body, and revive my fainting Spirits with Cordials and Comfortable words; while the only succour those about thee afford, are bitter Scoffs, & Wine mingled with Gall at thy hour of Death. How may my Face be  
con-

## An Infallible way

confounded with shame, which am so way-ward and impatient to suffer a light Affliction for, or from thee, who endured such extream unpittied torments for me.

Here Thou healed all that came unto Thee; and far be it from me, to think thy glory hath abated of thy power, of thy mercy; that the *Head* is less pittiful on the *Throne*, than on the *Foot-stoole*. In all our Afflictions thou art Afflicted. Still and ever thou art our assured, faithful, all-sufficient Physitian, and healest all that come unto Thee. Oh could we have our constant recourse unto thee in our maladies! 'tis as impossible we should *want help*, as thou *power* and *mercy*. No *Disease* shall ever thrust any of thy *Patients* in the *Grave*, till thou turn the Key, and open it. Give me but as much comfort in this my sorrow, as thou givest me security,

## to Contentment.

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rity; and at my worst, I shall do well.

Now is the time of my great Providence and Patience, Fortitude and Courage; to bring forth that store I have been so long gathering; to practice that Christianity I have so pleasantly, so peaceably possessed. O, let my temper and moderation appear in this difficulty: Let the world see the fruit of my Religion; that I can wisely digest my own desires; as well advise my self as others. 'Tis a scandal to Religion to afflict our selves with great and heavy sadness, whilst patient sufferings are highly instructive to our Brethren. Where is the Consolation of holy Scripture? where is the fruit of Preaching? where is the sweetness of Prayer? where is the Counsel of Wise men? where is the result of experience? where is the  
exer-



## An Infalible way

exercise of Faith, and Love, and Patience ? where are my good thoughts , purposes , and resolutions, so well taken in the time of my Prosperity , to be an example of courage to the rest of mankind ? where is that huge Cloud of Witnesses, of so many patient ones, whose constancy I have so often admired ? Especially my Lord and Saviour, the most glorious Character of Patience and Submission, Freedom, and Courtesie, Candor and Ingenuity, Lowliness and Humility, Gentleness and Meekness, Charity and Compassion, Kindness and Affability, Mildness and Forgiveness, Trust and Confidence. An Abiss of Love, of Mercy, of Dolor, of Ignominy, of Blood, of Loathing, of Excess, of Admiration, of Amazement, which swelleth all Thoughts, dryeth up all Tears, stoppeth

stoppeth all Mouths , easeth all Pains, drencheth all Conceptions. Who can now complain he doth, or suffers too much? or is treated with less tenderness then he deserves? All I endure, is nothing to what I should, and thou did'st for me, O Saviour, the Contemplation and Application of thy sufferings is enough to sweeten a whole Sea of bitterness. I care not how unpleasant a Portion I find here, if the power and virtue of thy precious death may season it to my Soul.

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The



T H E  
CONCLUSION.

**A**Nd now me-thinks, *Amidst these thoughts*, it is no uneasie thing in all Estates to be content ; and not so much to *suffer*, as *receive* all that happens , as if I would not have it fall out otherwise. Me-thinks I could now extract gain, out of losses , and stand upon the Ruins of them , saying, I have lost nothing ; make dammage it self give Interest, for what ever it takes from me : the crossfest advantages  
com-

## to Contentment

III

comply with and serve my main concern ; and my very Enemies Tributary to my welfare.

Oh, how unconcern'd might I pass through the Allurements and Affrightments of this flattering, molesting, tumultuous, busie world, but for my base distrustful evil heart of unbelief in departing from the *Living God*, who by his own Communication can make a Rich Amends for the loss of any Temporal Concernments ; and deliver us from the want of them, even while they are wanting. *That* will not fail to give *Patience*, if not *Peace* ; *Contentment*, if not *Riches* ; *Submission* to *His Will*, if not the *fulfilling* of *our Own* : and 'tis almost all one, never to be in Want, and never to be without *Contentment*.

Was



## An Infallible way

Was my Treasure in Heaven,  
and my heart fixed there upon the  
Center of my Bliss and Happi-  
ness, how unmoved would the  
*Rumors* of Wars, and Devastati-  
ons find and leave me; which In-  
vade and Agitate mens breasts,  
and so disturb their most pleasant  
composed houres: I should let  
*Him* alone to Rule the world that  
made it; to take care of me and  
mine, who hath ingaged it, who  
cannot do otherwise; whose care  
and providence watches over me;  
whose eye, and ear, and armes  
are open to me, whose bowels  
yearn for me; whose blood pur-  
chased me; whose Eternal Blessed-  
ness awaits me.

Had I Conquered my Inclina-  
tions to the things below, and  
raised my mind above their Crosses  
and Contents, how confidently,



## An Infallible Way

stant lively view of those Rewards of Virtue God hath promised, and His Followers are now blessed in ; how secure should I sit from the blasts of Fortune in that place of uninterrupted perfect Joy ; and look down with compassion, scorn, and indignation upon this little Mole-hill of busie Ants, as Fools and Mad-men ; though all the World conspir'd to make me miserable :

Oh ! could I but be taken up more with the *Love of God* ; had I an absolute Empire over my *Passions* ; did I rightly imbrace the Reconciliation wrought with him through Jesus Christ, and maintain'd that *Faith* by good works (without which Food, it pines away, and falls into a shaking Palsy ) were I always careful of pleasing him and my own Conscience ;

ence; might I, but see, and feel the loveliness of my dear Redeemer till my heart was filled, and ravish'd with that Love; had I but more of the Spirit of Adoption, and those filial Affections to *my Heavenly Father*; could I but breath and pant more earnestly after Him, and maintain a constant Correspondence and Communion with him; how little should I value, how easily could I spare those trifles the pur-blind world admire? How careless should I be, who had the Pleasures, Honours, Riches of it? how far should I be from envying of them? I would pity the miserable Tyrants of this world, as Slaves, and worse than Beggars, that tast of that Kingdom of Love and Pleasure, which dwells in a true Believers breast? I would bear the *loss* of other things with the same frame of Spirit I *enjoy'd*

I 2      them;



## An Infallible way

them; Refuse to part with no enjoyment to secure this, and follow all the pomp and pleasure of the World to the Grave, without a sad Heart, or a sorrowful Countenance. I would sit down Contentedly in a sence of my *Father's* Love, though I had nothing else; yea, reckon I had all, if I wanted not this: Rest satisfied if I have but a Father in Heaven, though I have never a Friend upon Earth; *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* Death it self should not dismay me, but be welcomed with joy and gladness, as an Auxillary sent from God, to give me the *Day & Tryumph* over all my Conflicts, to free me from the Troubles and Conflicts of a wretched Life. *That* takes off all our Burdens, strikes the sweat off our Brow, calls us for ever off our warfare, sounds the joyful Retreat from all our Conflicts, frees the Captive with-

## to Contentment.

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without Ransome, dismisses the Oppressed without the consent of the Oppressor, brings home the Banished in spite of the Banisher, heals the Sick without pain of Physick, mends all marred Fortunes, repays all Damgages, makes even all Disorders and Inequalities, necessitates us to be no more miserable. The dust of the Grave will dry up our Tears, bury all our cares in silence and oblivion; we shall have a secure Repose in that bed of Rest, and never be put to the hazard of a Battle more. His everlasting Arms stand open to Receive and Crown us (as soon as the Fight is over) in that quiet Region, where all evil is separated from us, no Enemy to appear against us, no discomposure, interruption, or end of perfect Tranquility and Happiness; where are Mansions made ready for us, that call *Escorial's*, *Louver's*, the stateliest proudest

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proudest Structures, but better modell'd *Dung-hills*, lessening into inconsiderableness, undecernableness: where Patient, chearful enduring Hardship in our warfare is *Recorded*, reckon'd among our *Faithful Services*, light Afflictions for a moment, Rewarded, with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; where we shall put off our Helmet, and put on our Crown; exchange the whole Armour of God for Robes and Diadems, Septers and Palmes: Ensigns of Kings and Conquerors.

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ps 45.1

My tongue is as the pen of  
A swift writer

Ralph Hall sculpsor